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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 NICOSIA 000324

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DEPARTMENT FOR EUR/SE, EUR/ERA, IO/UNP

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TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [UNFICYP](#) [CY](#) [TU](#)  
SUBJECT: T/C NEGOTIATOR CLAIMS "ENOUGH" PROGRESS IN CURRENT  
TALKS, WANTS FULL-FLEDGED NEGOTIATIONS BY JUNE 21

REF: NICOSIA 306

Classified By: Ambassador Ronald Schlicher, Reasons 1.4 (b), (d)

11. (C) Summary: "When will (Cypriot President Demetris) Christofias ever leave the harbor that (former President and famous hard-liner) Papadopoulos built?" complained Turkish Cypriot negotiator Ozdil Nami in a May 20 meeting with the Ambassador. Nami, without noting his own side's unhelpful public remarks, expressed both surprise and consternation at public allegations by Christofias and other Greek Cypriot leaders that little progress had been made in working groups and technical committees currently working under the UN-brokered March 21 agreement (Reftel). He countered that real success had been achieved in the economy and EU working groups--a point on which his G/C counterpart also agrees--and cited T/C examples of flexibility in the governance group to boot. Nami worried that Christofias was in the thrall of his nationalist coalition partner (DIKO), which might explain his overall negativity and attacks against Turkey. The T/C negotiator, in response to Ambassador's question regarding T/C reluctance publicly to endorse the now traditional formula, reaffirmed T/C and Turkish support for a bi-zonal, bi-communal solution in the spirit of the Annan Plan. The Ambassador, in a message he has repeated to both sides, urged Nami to plan for success, not failure, to avoid injecting procedural issues when things get tough, and to refrain from squabbling in the media. He also encouraged that both leaders find ways to accommodate some of each other's political needs, and, as they had done on March 21, to use their upcoming May 23 meeting to find a mutually-agreed way forward. Ultimately, Nami believed there was enough progress already to go to full-fledged negotiations on June 21, and sought international sanction of Christofias should that not pass. End Summary.

"He should have called"

12. (C) Nami lamented that Christofias's less than stellar assessment of the working groups and technical committees' progress came as a surprise to him, especially given the fact that he had met with G/C negotiator George Iacovou two days prior to Christofias's first utterance. "If there were serious concerns, Iacovou would have raised them with me," he added. Nami did not mention whether he had given Iacovou a heads-up regarding Nami's own press interview printed in papers on May 19.

13. (C) Nami claimed that the two sides had an agreement first to discuss friction points at the negotiator level, then bump them up to the leaders if no redress could be found. He said that the G/Cs clearly had not followed this protocol, to the detriment of all involved. "Christofias should have instructed Iacovou to call me to work on it...his public

statements against us and Turkey destroy the good atmosphere." To prevent further dust-ups and improve coordination of the groups and committees, Nami had suggested to Iacovou to meet twice a week, but has still not heard back from him. (Note: Per reftel, Iacovou also favors twice-weekly meetings. End Note)

"We already have enough results"

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4.(C) Nami told the Ambassador there were "already enough results" to move to full-fledged negotiations on June 21, never mind the fact that according to the March 21 agreement, such talks should take place regardless. Iacovou had agreed with him that the only possible scenario under which direct negotiations would not commence on June 21 would be "no progress" at all, which was clearly not the case. Nami pointedly asked the Ambassador if the international community would remain a "passive bystander" if Christofias refused to start direct negotiations on the agreed date. The Ambassador replied that Nami was planning for failure, when all of us should be planning for success.

15. (C) Nami cited progress in the economic and EU working groups--a point on which both parties actually agree--plus T/C flexibility and movement in the governance working group. He said that the Talat had agreed to consider G/C proposals, instead of sticking to his initial position, on two important areas: T/Cs' original insistence on foreign judges in the judiciary in order to break deadlocks, and the creation of a "Presidential Council" to wield executive

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power, as envisaged in the 2004 Annan Plan. Talat felt secure in doing this, Nami said, because the Greek Cypriots respected the principle of political equality, the acceptance of which "makes our life so much easier."

16. (C) In working groups where little progress has been registered so far--property, territory, and security and guarantees--Nami either blamed G/C intransigence or said that the issues were so thorny that they could only be solved at a later date by the leaders. On property, he rejected G/C demands--which the G/Cs see as grounded in EU and international law--that all original owners be free to determine the fate of their property, favoring instead a bi-communal property board using mutually-agreed criteria that would take into consideration the rights of present owners as well. The T/Cs had made three counter-proposals, which have not yet been answered. On territory, Nami hoped that a set of principles could be devised to govern possible adjustments; proposed maps could be exchanged later. As to the security working group, he hoped the sides could devise the outline of a federal police force. Nami asserted that Iacovou had admitted that such issues, by their complex nature, would have to be dealt with by the leaders, and agreed to Nami's interim goals. The Ambassador urged Nami to find, where possible, bridging proposals if convergence could not be achieved.

"Is Christofias Ready?"

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17. (C) Nami complained, in a refrain the T/C leadership often repeats, that they had expected "more" from Christofias. It seemed as if the G/C leader regretted the March 21 agreement and was not ready for real progress. Further, the Greek Cypriot leader's constant attacks against Ankara were not helpful. He asked the Ambassador point-blank if Christofias was involved in a power struggle with his DIKO coalition partners and FM Markos Kyprianou. Nami worried that the Greek Cypriots would use "delaying tactics" to push the solution process into 2009 and thereby gain concessions from Turkey, whose EU accession bid will be up for review then.

¶8. (C) The Ambassador noted that distrust unfortunately existed on both sides, hence the need for each party to help the other politically as much as possible. In his analysis, Christofias was clearly in control, and the RoC is not trying to use Turkey's 2009 accession review as a means of avoiding decisions in the current UN process; Papadopoulos had tried such a strategy in the 2006 review to disastrous effect for the RoC. Rather, despite the political obstacles, Christofias still wanted to find a way forward.

(When Pressed) "We remain committed to bi-zonal, bi-communal federation"

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¶9. (C) In response to the Ambassador's inquiry, Nami assured that both Turkish Cypriots and Turkey remained committed to a bi-zonal, bi-communal federation that consisted of two constituent states and preserved the "essence" of the Annan Plan. Furthermore, the new state would not have to reapply to the UN or the EU (Note: In comments to Turkish media earlier this year, Talat had raised the necessity that the new state reapply, a point one of his close advisers repeated to us recently. End Note). This was the very "partnership state" that the T/Cs and Turkey envision when referring to a post-solution Cyprus. Nami also refuted G/C claims that the Turkish Cypriots now rejected the 1977 and 1979 High-level Agreements, and charged that the Greek Cypriots had refused to consider the Annan Plan and would not even agree to mention of "UN Body of Work" in the committee/working groups' terms of reference.

¶10. (C) The Ambassador noted that it would serve the interests of both sides to get past "labeling" and work concretely on moving forward. He told Nami that, while he accepts Nami's assurances over T/C intentions regarding a bi-zonal, bi-communal solution, certain Turkish pronouncements, most recently an April Turkish National Security Council press release that omitted mention of bi-communality, raised doubts and fears among Greek Cypriots. Nevertheless, he noted that he had urged the G/Cs to forget their doubts and "prove the proposition one way or the other" by engaging substantively with the other side.

Dual Track Approach out of May 23?

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¶11. (C) Nami seemed to hint that a dual-track approach might be an option to break the current quasi-impasse. Separately, he and Iacovou had rated the work of all the technical committees and working groups and would give those lists to the two leaders for their May 23 meeting. They in turn would prioritize the lists, and once full-fledged negotiations had commenced, would tackle first the areas where the most convergence had been achieved. The working groups and technical committees would continue to work on a parallel track, either feeding information to the two leaders or continuing work on areas where there was little convergence. The Ambassador told Nami that both leaders on May 23 had to "clear the air" and meet--at least at a minimal level--the political needs of the other to keep the process moving forward.

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Comment:

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¶12. (C) There has been some real progress and some real stumbling in the work of the technical committees and working groups; both sides seemingly deserve an equal measure of praise and blame. Luckily, Nami and Iacovou have been able to maintain their good relations despite the turbulence. The main culprit at present, more than the "how much progress" issue itself, seems to be the vicious circle of mutual distrust between the communities. Christofias's fears of Turkey's intentions, at least regarding Deep State-types and

the military, is warranted to a degree. But his public broadsides only weaken the hands of the pro-solution Talat and his main ally in Ankara, Prime Minister Erdogan, while strengthening the very forces that think that no-solution is the best solution. Talat is then forced to publicly defend Turkey, which only proves and reinforces Greek Cypriot suspicions. We hope that both leaders will clear the air on May 23 and start planning for success, not failure. We will continue to push both sides, at all levels, in this direction, and give them no reason to think that they can avoid decisions now since the USG would take their side in the "blame game" that would follow some breakdown in the process.

SCHLICHER